(At this stage, some hon. Members left the Chamber)

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Gurudas Das Gupta, are you walking out? (*Interruption*) Shri Shankar Dayal Singh—absent. Shri Mentay Padmanabham—absent. Shri Moturu Hanumantha Rao—absent. Shrimati Sushma Swaraj—absent. Shri V. Narayanasamy—(*Interruptions*).

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Madm, I am on a point of order.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No point of order, please. It is Calling Attention now.

MR. GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: I have already called your name. You were not there.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: I am on a point or order.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: What is your point of order?

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Madam, my name has been dragged in this House via a news-item of the Indian Express. If any of this matter is going to be raised, naturally, I would have been the best person to give all the facts. Of course, I took the decision and stand by that decision. The previous Government deliberately tried to harass Ajitabh Bachchan because of his being the brother of Amitabh Bachchan because Amitabh Bachchan was a challenge to Mr. V. P. Singh in Allahabad. (*Interruptions*).

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I have not allowed that matter. I cannot allow you to give an explanation when the matter is not being raised in this House.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: I am not giving explanation.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Under which rule?

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Under the rule of personal explanation (*Interruptions*). Everyone heard the allegaiton aginst me. There was an allegation made by the DMK Members. They have a grouse against me because I was the principal person in the Cabinet for dismissal of their Government for their anti-national activities and therefore, they have brought this issue up But the fact is that it is because of political harassment of the Amitabh Bachchan family by V. P. Singh. I saw through it and I took the decision I stand by that decision and the country should appreciate it and I know the country does appreciate it. These people could not face it. That is why they walked out.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Gurudas Das Gupta, I called your name. You were not here.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA (West Bengal): Madam, let me make my submission. It is for you to take the decision.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, you call the attention of the Minister and don't make a submission.

CALLING ATTENTION TO A MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Price situation in the country and action taken by Government in the matter

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA (West Bengal): Madam Chairperson, I call the attention of the Minister of Finance to the price situation in the country and action taken by Government in the matter.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): Madam Deputy Chairman, the price situation has remained under pressure during the current financial year as in the last year. During the first 35 weeks of the current financial year 1991-92 until November 30, 1991, the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) has registered an increase of 1.1 per cent compared with an increase of 8.5 per cent during the corresponding period of the last year. The sharp rise in prices during the current year is mainly due to higher

[Shri Rameshwar Thakur]

increases of prices for food articles (21.1 per cent this year compared with 14.2 per cent during this period of last year) and manufactured products (7.5 per cent this year compared with 5.7 last year). The annual rate of inflation in terms of WPI on a point-to-point basis which peaked at over 16 per cent in August 1991 has declined on November 30, 1991, to 13.7 per cent, compared with 10.1 per cent on the corresponding date last year. In terms of the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the price rise during the first seven months of the current year upto October 1991 has been 10.9 per cent compared with 10.2 per cent during the corresponding period of last year.

An analysis of movements in the Wholesale Price Index for some essential commodities during April—November 1991 indicates that the prices of rice, pulses, fruits and vegetables, milk, condiments and spices, raw cotton, edible oils, paper and paper products, fertilisers, machinery and machine tools etc, have registered substantial increase in prices this year. However, coffee, raw jute, kerosene and khandsari etc. have witnessed some decrease in prices during the current year compared with those prevailing at the end of the last financial year.

The build-up of inflationary pressures is attributable to: (a) a large and persistent fiscal deficits over the years resulting in excessive growth in money supply, liquidity overhang and increase in effective demand, (b) supply and demand imbalances in sensitive commodities like pulses, edible oils etc. due to shortfalls in domestic production and the inability of the government to import desired quantities due to severe foreign exchange crisis, (c) wage-price spiral in organised industrise leading to cost-push inflation in addition to demand-pull inflation, (d) sharp increases in procurement prices of cereals and consequent rise in issue prices which set the trend for open market prices, (e) imperfect market conditions in some products like fruits and vegetables, (f) increase in transportation and distribution costs due to two hikes of petroleum product prices during 1990 and another increase during 1991-92, (g) the unavoidable increase in railway fares and freight rates, increase of excise duties on retain items, increase in petroleum product prices (except for kerosene and diesel) and issue prices of sugar and fertilisers in the budget for 1991-92 as a part of fiscal corrections, and (h) The inflatonary expectations in the economy due to uneven progress of monsoon until the end of August this year.

The acceleration in the rate of inflaton is a cause for concern because (a) it has surfaced in spite of three bumper harvests in a raw and prospects of another good crop this year; (b) the scope for supply management through imports is limited in view of the precarious balance of payments situation; (c) the scope for a further monetary squeeze is constrained as the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) is already at 15 per cent with an incremental CRR at the rate of 10 per cent, the Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) has already been raised to 38.5 per cent, there are selective credit control measures of varying degrees on foodgrains, cotton and kapas, oilseeds and edible oils; and the lending rates and margin money for bank advances have been increased substantially. It is equally worrisome that prices have tended to rise even in respect of commodities which are not in short supply.

The containment of inflation is high on the agenda of the Government as inflation hurts everybody, particularly the poorer sections of the society whose incomes are not indexed to prices. The multi-pronged strategy adopted by the Government to contain the rise of prices include a strict fiscal discipline and a planned rdeuction in gross fiscal deficit from 8.4 per cent of Gross Domestic Product in 1990-91 to 6.5 per cent of GDP in 1991-92, check on expansion of money supply and various selective credit control measures, providing incentives for savings and higher production, more effective management of supply and demand for essential commodities, streamlining of the public distribution system and a strict action against hoarders and profiteers. The Government has also undertaken a number of structural policy reforms in the spheres of trade, industry and public sectors. These

reforms coupled with a strict monetary and fiscal discipline are expected to dampen inflationary pressures by increasing the efficiency and productivity and imparting dynamism to the growth process. At the same time, as the balnace of payments situation stabilises, the easing of import restraints would not only facilitate supply management through imports of essential commodities to the extent feasible, but also curb inflationary pressure.

The prospects of agricultural production this year are reasonably good due to normal monsoons in most of the regins of the country. The kharif foodgrains production is estimated at 95.24 to 99 million tonnes as against 100.4 million tonnes during 1990-91. The production of cereals and levels of stocks of rice and wheat are also comfortable. Production and stock position of sugar is satisfactroy and production of potatoes has shown some improvement. Oilseeds production during 1990-91 is estimated at 191 lakh tonnes and the target for 1991-92 crop is 185 lakh tonnes. Actual kharif oilseeds production is estimated at 105.3 lakh tonnes compared with the target of 101 lakh tonnes. With greater attention on supply and demand management, localised and seasonal fluctuations in prices can be minimised in the short run. The Food Corporation of India has been instructed to of load wheat on the open market with a view to dampen prices. The State Trading Corporation has been instructed to import additional quantities of edible oils and the States have been permitted to import edible oils directly for supply to the Public Distribution System. Due to these various anti-inflationary measures taken by the Government the annual rate of inflation in terms of Wholesale Price Index has started declining from the peak level of 16.7 per cent in August, 1991 and stood at 13.7 per cnet as on the 30th November, 1991. However, there is no room to be complacent and the Government continues to attach the higher priority for the containment of the inflation.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Gurudas Das Gupta. With the constraints of time and the importance of the subject I would like every Member who has given his name and which is listed before me to speak pointedly so that everyone would get a chance to speak. For a meaningful debate, please be pointed. So, don't make a long speech. He will speak for ten minutes. Rest of you will ask questions because there is a difference between a Calling Attention and a Short Duration Discussion. So, he will call the attention and he will speak first.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Madam, this is an anticipated statement of the Government. That is my understanding, going through the statement. At the very beginning, let me ask my first question from the hon. Finance Minister —who happens to be here—whether it is really true that the rate of inflation is going down. I would like to question the contention of the Government that inflation is really going down. His assessment is based on the Wholesale Price Index (WPI). It is well known, Madam, that products are not sold in the market according to the Wholesale Price Index. Accordingly I have with me two other calculations. According to the All India Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labourers—which in my opinion covers a very large percentage of the rural population, may be the majority —the index of inflation is registering a constant increase. According to that statistic, inflation at the moment is 23.1 per cent over the last year. According to another statistic of the Price Index for the Industrial Labourers, the inflation is also constantly on the rise. In the month of May it was 12.1 per cent. And in the month of September it was 15.7 per cent. Therefore, the contention of the Govrenment that prices are on the decline is far from truth. I would ask from the hon. Minister whether he still believes that inflation is going down. Madam, this statement, according to me, is a masterpiece of manpulation. There is an attempt to mislead the country that inflation is on the decline. There is an attempt to lure the Members of Parliament into the belief that something new is happening and is going to happen in the world, partcularly in this country. Madam the point is the attention of the Government was called for seeking information as to what the Government has done to contain the prices. If you go

[Shri Gurudas Das Gupta]

through the pedantic claims made in the course of the Statement, there is no single item, there is no single step which the Govrenment can say has been undertaken by the Government to contain prices. There is only a pious wish. There is only an explanation of the steps which the Government would like the State Governments to take.

Madam, in the last session, we discussed price rise. At that time he had said that the price rise is due to foreign exchange crisis. The hon. Minister told us yesterday that the foreign exchange crisis has been partially averted. In the last session the Finance Minister told us that price will come down if and when Government is able to curtail the expenditure and narrow the deficit gap in the budget. Thanks to the World Bank, Shri Manmohan Singhji has been able to build up a reserve of Rs. 8000 crores as explained yesterday. He has cut down the expenditure to the extent that he curtailed the payment to be made to the employees retiring under the Voluntary Retirement Scheme. That is why the Government has not paid money to at least 1000 labourers who have retired under VRS in a leading factory in Durgapur.

Madam, Mr. Manmohan Singhji has been telling the House that this was a seasonal inflation and when the bumper crop will arrive in the market there is going to be a relaxation in the prices. If I agree that there has been a decline from 16.7 per cent to 13.7 per cent, then what is the level of prices in relation to the essnetial commodities? The prices of tre essential commodities have increased by 20 per cent. That is why the situation is becoming precarious and unbearable for the common people. Even if we compare the present rate of inflation with the rate of inflation of the last year—the hon. Minister had ctaegorically stated that he had inherited the crisis—last year inflation was 7.9 per cent. This year the inflation rate according to him—which I have every reason to question—is 13.7 per cent. What is the reason for the rate of inflation to get doubled from that of last year, when according to him the crisis was much greater last year? I believe this Governmest does not have much scope to manoeuvre with relation to price rise. They do not have any scope to manoeuvre and this the situation which this Government has created. The balance of payments is good, he assured the House yesterday. But it is not that better so as to enable him to make lavish imports in order to tackle this situation of price rise. He cannot go in for lavish imports There is already a squeeze in the market. Therefore you cannot further squeeze the market. It is being said that industrial development has almost reached a negative point. According to leading industrialists the industrial growth is now around 2.5 per cent as against 14.2 per cent that was there last year. Therefore that is the limit to which this squeeze in the monetary market has been taken to. You cannot further compress the monetary situation. According to latest reports, industrial growth has reached minus one per cent. Therefore you cannot further squeeze the liquidity condition. That is why I say that there is hardly any scope for the Government to manoeuvre and this the Government knows. Therefore, suddenly Mr. Manmohan Singh has started believing in change of heart. When he could not change the price level, he started believing in change of heart. He has appealed to the delinquent business community to bring down the prices. This price rise was generated because of inflation and inflation was generated because of the wrong policies of the Government. This is all the more serious because the public distribution system in the country has collapsed. Instead of Government expanding the public distribution system, the system itself has collapsed. Even in the capital town market, where the Minister believes he is still in power, yet he is powerless to control inflation. The situation of public distribution system is precarious. What is the reason? What is the underlying cause for this uncontrolled runaway inflation? It is the economic gamble. It is the economic gamble which this Government has been indulging in ever since it came to power. A particular profit psychology has been created in this country. What is that? Three hundred business houses have been able to increase their profits

by 33.8 per cent by a slender increase of sale which is as low as 23.7 per cent. Less is the sale more is the prices and more is the profit and that is the inflation psychology that has gripped the country. In the current year, that is, 1991, top 20 business houses have earned an additional profit of 22.5 per cent by only increasing sales to the extent of 15 per cent. This is where the crux of the inflation calamity lies. Three is a profit psychology and the profit psychology tells the business community that you can bring down the sale but at the same time you can increase the profit. This is because the price is high. This is because of the wrong policy and the wrong signal that the Government has given to the business community. The new economic policy has given a wrong signal and the signal is that of privatisation. Privatisation today is the favoured child of the Government. Government is not going to interfere. The Government is adopting a laissez-faire policy. You can ride the economy and whatever happens to the people, the Govermnet will come to the Parliament and say that something new is going to happen. Madam, my charge is that this Government has totally failed to take care of the economic manipulation that is taking place in the country under its very nose. Therefore, the point is, either the Government should be able to arrest the price rise or the Government itself is changed by the people. There is no denying of the truth that inflation will have to be borne by the people upto a particular point beyond which inflation is unbearable. I beg of you, madam, to ask the Government to at least look into the situation prevailing in the country. Starvation deaths have started taking place in the country. How many people died in Andhra? This starvation is because of poverty and poverty is because the purchasing power is so low that they are not able to purchase even the minimum foodstuffs necessary for their subsistence. This is due to the inflation brought about by the Government. This is the Government that has led the people to starvation.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I just want to tell the hon. Members that we have a very heavy business. We have Appropriation. We have other discussions. If the House so agrees, we can dispense with the lunch hour or if they want to continue...

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: I believe, we can skip the lunch because of price rise..

SHRI JAGESH DESAI (Maharashtra): Those who want to have lunch can go. But let the House continue.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You can go and have it now also.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: I believe we can skip our lunch becasue starvation has started taking place in our country and so at least let us starve for some hours.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I don't want to be the cause of the starvation of these Members. You can go, have your lunch and come back. If the House agrees, we won't have the lunch hour.

SHRI G. SWAMINATHAN (Tamil Nadu): There is starvation in the USSR and no starvation in India.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I was only worrying that I must take the opinion of the Members because we do not want starvation caused to our people by not having the lunch hour.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Let the hon. Member find satisfaction because starvation is taking place in the Soviet Union. But let him take at least a little pain to understand that starvation is also taking place in our country.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Some Members do not want to dispense with the lunch hour. So we will have the lunch hour. अब जल्दी खत्म कीजिये ।

The Finance Minister also is to go and have his lunch. So, please conclude now... (*Interruptions*) Don't make a habit of arguing on things.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY (Pondicherry): I want to give my opinion.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Don't give your opinion. You gave. Others don't agree with it. Mr. Gurudas Das Gupta, go ahead.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Madam, it is a fact that the Government still believes that inflation is coming down. The main point is that the Government lives in a world of artical satisfaction. That is where we are hurt. There is no proper feeling or serise for the people. At least, the Government should have felt it is not being able to do what it should have done.. This is an essay saying that these are the reasons for inflation to take place. The Government should be a little more compassionate. The Government should be apologetic for its failure. The Government should come to the people, to the Parliament saying, yes, this is the programme that this Government is going to take. If you go through the report, the Government has not come out with any programme to control the inflation. Monetary policy has failed; Public Distribution System has failed. Even after we have been able to get some money from the World Bank. we have failed. What next? The next step I suggest is that the Government must come out heavily against the manipulators of the economy. There must be a wide-scale arrest of people who are manipulating the economy, of people who are increasing the prices, of people who are responsible, to a very great extent, for inflation; that is, the delinquent business community. Government must come down heavily on them. I would like to know from the Minister how many people have been arrested. I would like to know from the minister whether the Government is in need of enactment of a new law. I would like to ask the Minister what advice has been given to the States to ensure that this step is taken to take care of the delinquency.

Second, I would like to tell the Government, there has to be an expansion and extension of the public distribution system. Is the Government aware that the system has failed? If the system has failed, what steps would the Government like to take to restore the public distribution system in the country?

Third, the Government must give out a single to the business community, to the private enterprise, that it is not going to allow this free-for-all position in the market. The market has become a seller's market. The price does not depend on the supply. It does depend on the whim of the supplier. This is the worst situation of the capitalist economy that prevails in our country. In order to tackle this situation what is the Government going to do? And this signal must go in a definite way.

[The Vice-Chairman (Prof. Chandresh P. Thakur): in the Chair] Madam,. . .

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. CHANDRESH P.THAKUR): I am not Madam.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: There is such frequent change in the Chair that it becomes impossible to take note of it. . .

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. CHANDRESH P. THAKUR): You must train your reflaxes to recognise the changes in the Chair.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: The point is the policy that the Government has taken, the policy of privatisation, the policy of giving a free hand to the private sector, the policy of total decontrol, the policy of scuttling the public sector, the policy of inviting multinationals and monopoly concerns, the policy of throwing open Indian's economy to foreign market...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. CHANDRESH P. THAKUR): You are still on price rise.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: ... is the basic reason for getting the private sector the signal that they can increase the

prices with impunity. That is my contention. The basic economic policy is responsible. I demand a change of the economic policy. And so long as the policy cannot be changed—the policy can be changed if the person is changed— so long as the person is not changed, so long as the Government is not changed, I would like the Government to take special care to restore confidence in the people that this Government is still in power. I wish the Prime Minister takes steps to restore credibility to the Government that this Government means business, that it is not going to sit a silent spectator when the price rise is taking away the vitals of the economy. Therefore, in conclusion, I would like Mr. Manmohan not to act as a professor of economics in this House of Elders but to behave as an administrator and let the House be informed what steps he would like to take on an emergency basis to control inflation...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. CHANDRESH P. THAKUR): The two roles are not mutually exclusive.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: That is true. But a professor is interested in giving a discourse and a Minister is interested in giving his line of action. If a Minister becomes a professor, it becomes difficult for us to become his pupil in the House. Therefore, I would like to know what steps the Government is taking on an emergency basis to tackle the inflation which has overtaken the country.

SHRI SOM PAL (Uttar Pradesh): I beg to differ from Mr. Gurudas Das Gupta and I request the honourable Minister to continue to act as a professor and not a politician.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. CHANDRESH P. THAKUR): That is how he will clarify these points.

श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह (बिहार) : उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, मूल्य-वृद्धि की चिंता केवल इस सदन की नहीं है, मैं समझता हूं कि मूल्य-वृद्धि की चिंता पूरे देश में है । और जो चिंता पूरे देश में रहती है, वही सबसे बड़ी चिंता इस सदन की भी हो जाती है ।

उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, जब-जब हमारा सत्र, कोई भी, छोटा या बड़ा सत्र, शुरू होता है तो मूल्य-वृद्धि की चर्चा होती है और मुझे खुशी है कि पिछले कई सत्रों में जब मूल्य-वृद्धि की चर्चा हुई तो गुरूदास दासगुप्त ने इसकी शुरूआत की । पिछली बार भी जब सदन में इस पर चर्चा हुई थी तो इन्होंने शुरूआत की थी और उसके जवाब में मंत्री महोदय ने जो कुछ कहा था मैं समझता हूं कि इस बार भी अपने जवाब में वही बातें कहेंगे जो उन्होंने पिछली बार कही थी। उपाध्यक्ष जी, मैं आपके माध्यम से सरकार से दो-चार बातों पर स्पष्टीकरण जानना चाहता हूं । यह ठीक है कि मनमोहन सिंह जी जब से वित्त मंत्री होकर आए हैं, एक नई आशा जगी है और उन्होंने कुछ ऐसे स्टेप्स लेने की कोशिश की है, जिनका क्या हश्र होगा देश पर हम नहीं कह सकते, लेकिन जो चिंता का विषय है और जिसके कारण रह-रहकर हम बहुत चिंतित हो जाते हैं, उपाध्यक्ष जी, वह कुछ और है। वह यह है कि पिछली 16 सितम्बर को, जब हमारा पिछला सत्र हो रहा था तो 16 सितम्बर को हो रहे सत्र में आर्थिक नीतियों के बारे में सरकार की ओर से डा० मनमोहन सिंह जी ने एक वक्तव्य दिया था और फिर ठीक तीन महीने बाद यानी 16 दिसम्बर को उन्होंने दूसरा वक्तव्य सरकार की नीतियों के बारे में दिया । पहले वक्तव्य में भी और परसों जो वक्तव्य इस सदन में दिया गया, उन्होंने यह कहा कि :—

"The statement also provides the details of the arrangements we hav concluded with the IMF which I had promised to lay before the House.

अभी कुछ देर पहले शून्यकाल में इस सदन में एक बड़ी भयानक चर्चा हुई, मैं उसमें जाना नहीं चाहता, लेकिन जब हम दोनों स्टेटमेंट्स को पढ़ते हैं तो उससे

[श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह]

ऐसा लगता है कि हमारी अर्थव्यवस्था की नकेल कहीं दूसरी जगह से संचालित हो रही है और जहां से भी हो रही है उसमें भारत गौण हो रहा है, विश्व की अर्थव्यवस्था प्रधान हो रही है ।

हम आज मूल्य वृद्धि की चिंता करते हैं। जो हमारे सामने बयान मंत्री महोदय ने दिया था, उसमें उन्होंने यह कहा कि 13.6 को थोक मूल्य सूचकांक है और उसके नीचे उन्होंने यह कहा कि जो विवरण दिया, उसने कहा कि इसमें बहुत सी ऐसी आइटेम्स हैं जिनके दाम बढ़े हैं और जिनके दाम घटे हैं। मैं सरकार से यह जानना चाहता हूं कि सरकार ने 220 ऐसी आइटेम का जिक्र किया है पहले भी जो कि एसेन्सियल आइटम्स हैं जिनके दाम घटने या बढ़ने से मूल्य वृद्धि पर असर पड़ता है और उसी से अमीर अमीर होते हैं और गरीब गरीब होते हैं मेरी सूचना के अनुसार 220 एसेन्सियल आइटम्स जो देश में हैं उनमें से केवल 16 के दाम घटे हैं । तो 220 ऐसी आइटम्स हैं जिनके कारण दामों का बढ़ना या घटना होता है । तो मैं सबसे पहली बात सरकार से यह जानना चाहूंगा कि आप इसका विवरण दें और इस सदन को बताये कि इनमें से किन-किन चीजों के दाम घटे हैं और किन-किन चीजों के दाम बढ़े हैं? मेरी अपनी सूचना के अनुसार जो अमीरों के व्यवहार में आने की चीजें हैं, उनके दाम घटे हैं लेकिन गरीबों के व्यवहार में जो आने वाली चीजें हैं उनके दाम बढ़े हैं । जैसे खाद्यान्न के दाम बढ़े हैं जो कि गरीब लोगों के लिए सब से आवश्यक है । जब कि खाद्यान्न जो है, किसान जहां पैदा करता है वहां उसको वह दाम नहीं मिलता जो बेचने वाले को, बड़े महानगरों में या बड़ी जगहों में मिलता है, उपाध्यक्ष जी, आप अच्छी तरह से कृषि की बातें जानते हैं, आप उस क्षेत्र से आते हैं, लेकिन जो सच्चाई है वह यह है जो चावल मुजफ्फरपुर या गया के बाजारों में 300, 400 रुपये क्विंटल बिकता है, वहीं 400 रुपये क्विंटल का चावल वहां से उठाकर पटना आते आते 550 रुपये हो जाता है और वहीं पटना से कलकत्ता पहुंचते पहुंचते संभव है कि 650, 700 या 750 रुपये क्विंटल हो जाए । तो जो किसान उत्पादन करता है, उसको मूल्य कितना मिलता है और जो बिचौलिया है, जो वहां से लेकर बेचता है उसको मूल्य कितना मिलता है तो मैं सरकार से यह भी जानना चाहूंगा कि खाद्यान्नों में जो प्राइवेट हेण्डलिंग्स हो रही है, उससे मूल्यों में कितनी वृद्धि हुई है? आप बाजार देखकर के इन बातों को कहेंगे, अपने कागज देखकर के इन बातों को नहीं कहेंगे ।

उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, जब हम इन चर्चाओं को कर रहे हैं तो हमारे सामने कितनी चिंताएं खड़ी होती हैं और चिंताएं इस बात की खड़ी होती हैं, सरकार माने या न माने लेकिन किसी दिन की आप अखबार उठा लीजिए उसमें आप को पता लगेगा कि जो भी व्यवहार में आने वाली वस्तुएं हैं उनकी कीमतें दिन दूनी रात चौगुनी गति से बढ़ रही हैं ।

अभी गुरुदास दासगुप्त जी ने बताया कि 20 प्रतिशत हमारा मूल्य इस तरह का बढ़ा है । लेकिन मैं सरकार से एक बात जानना चाहता हूं कि आपने अपने स्टेटमेंट में पिछली बार यह कहा था कि मूल्यवृद्धि का मुख्य कारण यह है कि रेल भाड़े में वृद्धि करदी गयी । रेलवे किसकी सम्पत्ति है? वह भी सरकार की सम्पत्ति है या निजी सम्पत्ति है? दूसरी बात मैं यह जानना चाहता हूं कि बाजार में जो छोटी-मोटी चीजें बिकती हैं, अगर उसमें मूल्यवृद्धि हो जाये, मैं समझता हूं, यह हो सकता है कि किसी व्यापारी ने बढ़ा दिया हो या किसी बेचने वाले ने बढ़ा दिया हो । लेकिन आप जरा मूल्य सूचकांक को देखें और उससे आपको पता चलेगा कि जो सरकारी उत्पादन की चीजें हैं और सरकारी हैंडलिंग की जो चीजें हैं उनमें कितनी वृद्धि हुई है । कागज को देखें, आप कागज को तो कंट्रोल करते हैं और कागज सरकारी क्षेत्रों में भी बनता है । उसमें किस तरह

की वृद्धि हुई है ? आप लोहे को देखें, स्टील में किस तरह की वृद्धि हुई है साल भर के अन्दर ? वह तो सरकारी उत्पादन में मुख्य रूप से होता है । सीमेंट का क्या हाल है ? चीनी का क्या हाल है ? तेल का क्या हाल है ? इन सारी चीजों को देखें और उसके बावजूद भी आप बार-बार आश्वासन दिये चले जा रहे हैं कि मूल्यवृद्धि को हम रोकेंगे । पिछली बार भी इस देश को आश्वासन दिया गया था कि हम मूल्यवृद्धि को रोकेंगे और हम एक स्थिरता लायेंगे । मैं समझता हूं कि केवल बातों से काम चलने का नहीं है । इसके लिये आपको निश्चित रूप से बाजार भावों को समतल लाना होगा, जिससे गरीब अपनी खरीदारी कर सके और इसलिये माननीय उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, मैं सरकार से, इस सदन से कुछ बातें जानना चाहता हूं ।

पहली तो यह, आप यह बतायें कि चीजों की कीमतें तीन महीने के अन्दर बढ़ी हैं या घटी हैं ? अगर बढ़ी हैं तो वे 220 आईटम, जिनकी बातें हमने कही, उनमें किन-किन चीजों के दाम बढ़े और किन-किन चीजों के दाम घटे हैं । दूसरी बात, मैं सरकार से यह जानना चाहूंगा कि रुपये का अवमूल्यन रुका या नहीं रुका ? आज के अखबार में यह समाचार आया है कि सन् 1947 में जिस रुपये की कीमत 100 पैसा थी, उस समय आना और पाई का हिसाब भी चलता था, आज उस रुपये की कीमत लगभग 6.7 रह गयी है, यानी कि 93 प्रतिशत अवमूल्यन सन् 1947 से लेकर अब तक हुआ है । आप समझिए कि आजाद देश का क्या भविष्य है और क्या हम कर रहे हैं ?

तीसरी बात, मैं यह जानना चाहूंगा कि विदेश व्यापार में आपने इजाफा किया या नहीं किया, क्योंकि आप जब तक विदेश व्यापार में इजाफा नहीं करेंगे तब तक आपकी मूल्यवृद्धि की बात भी आपके कंट्रोल से बाहर की रहेगी और मेरा जहां तक ख्याल है कि विश्व अर्थव्यवस्था की बात जो लोग गहराई से जानते हैं, मैं तो गहराई से नहीं जानता हूं, मैं तो आम जनता के प्रतिनिधि के रूप में एक उपभोक्ता हूं जो कि चीजों के मूल्यों को खरीदार की तरह से जानता हूं । लेकिन जब तक 14 से 16 प्रतिशत हम अपने निर्यात को नहीं ले जाते हैं, विदेश व्यापार में इजाफा नहीं करते हैं, तब तक मैं समझता हूं कि किसी तरह से आप अवमूल्यन को रोक नहीं सकते हैं । चौथी बात, मैं यह जानना चाहता हूं कि वृद्धि का सीधा सम्बन्ध सरकारी फिजूलखर्ची से है । आप सरकारी कार्यों में और सरकारी उपक्रमों से लेकर जितनी भी चीजें हैं उनमें भयानक रूप से आज फिजूलखर्ची हो रही है और आपको घाटा लग रहा है और अन्त में वह घाटा जाकर आम आदमी के जिम्मे पड़ता है । आप उस फिजूलखर्ची को रोकने और उन उपक्रमों के तथा दूसरी चीजों में जो घाटा हो रहा है उसके लिए आप क्या कर रहे हैं ? पांचवीं बात, मैं यह जानना चाहता हूं कि जब तक आप वितरण प्रणाली में सुधार नहीं लाते हैं, मेरी समझ में तब तक आप मूल्यवृद्धि को ठीक से रोक नहीं सकते । उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, रूस में जिस समय यह सब हो रहा था, ठीक उस समय मैंने रूस में रहकर के देखा कि सोवियत संघ की सरकार की जो सबसे बड़ी असफलता हुई वह जन वितरण प्रणाली को लेकर के हुई ।

मुझे एक बात की बड़ी खुशी है । मेरी पत्नी कल ही बता रही थी कि आलू और प्याज का दाम घटा है और वह खुद बता रही थीं कि दो-ढ़ाई रुपए किलो आलू और प्याज मिल रहा है और सरकारी दुकानों में तो अवश्य ही मिल रहा है ।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (प्रो० चन्द्रेश्वर पो०ठाकुर) : तब तो आप मंत्री जी को काम्प्लीमेंट करिए, इसके लिए ।

श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह : मैं तो कह रहा हूं कि मुझे खुशी है । मैं उनको धन्यवाद देता हूं लेकिन उनको धन्यवाद मैं तब दूंगा, जिस तरह से आलू और

[श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह]

प्याज की कीमतों में कमी आई, उसी तरह से आप तेल की कीमतों को, खाद्यान्न की कीमतों को, चीनी की कीमतों को, सब्जी की कीमतों को, रोजमर्रा के सामान की कीमतों को कम कर पाएंगे । उसके लिए जब तक आप जन वितरण प्रणाली में सुधार नहीं करते हैं, तब तक आप न तो मूल्य वृद्धि को रोक सकते हैं और न उस पर नियंत्रण पा सकते हैं ।

महोदय, इन सारी चीजों को देखने से पता चलता है कि एक ओर यह सरकार व्यापारियों से डरती है और दूसरी ओर यह सरकार ऐसे अंतर्राष्ट्रीय आर्थिक शिकंजे में फंसी हुई है, जहां से इसका संचालन होता है और इसलिए जो स्टेटमेंट हमारे सामने 16 तारीख को वित्त मंत्री डा० मनमोहन सिंह ने दिया है, यह एक डाक्यूमेंट है, शोध कार्य है और निश्चित रूप से पढ़े-लिखे लोगों के लिए चश्मा पहन-पहनकर बार-बार पढ़ने की चीज है । लेकिन गरीब का इससे तो कुछ भला होने वाला नहीं है । इसलिए एक गरीब आदमी को उसकी जरूरत की जो चीजें चाहिएं, 8–10 चीजें चाहिएं, आप केवल उन पर नियंत्रण लगा दें । मैं समझता हूं कि यह देश आपको हृदय से धन्यवाद देने लगेगा ।

उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, अंतिम बात मैं यह कहना चाहता हूं कि आखिर यह देश दिल्ली का ही तो नहीं है । आखिर यह देश महानगरों का ही तो नहीं है । पिछली बार जो बजट पेश किया गया था, उसमें दिल्ली के लिए 13 अरब रुपए रखे गए थे जब कि पूरे देश में सिंचाई के लिए साढ़े तीन अरब रुपए, लॉ एंड आर्डर के लिए 17 अरब रुपए और शिक्षा के लिए 18 अरब रुपए दिए गए थे । जब कि इस देश की नियति यह है कि 42 प्रतिशत लोग गरीबी रेखा के नीचे हैं और 84 प्रतिशत लोगों का गुजर-बसर आज भी खेती पर हो रहा है । तो मुख्य रूप से इस मूल्य वृद्धि के शिकार कौन लोग हो रहे हैं ? मुख्य रूप से इस मूल्य वृद्धि के शिकार हमारे मजदूर वर्ग के लोग चाहे वे शहरों में रहते हैं या गावों में रहते हैं, वे हो रहे हैं । बड़े लोग तो इसके शिकार होते नहीं हैं । मारुति की कीमत 10,000 रुपए बढ़ जाए, कोई फर्क नहीं पड़ता है । इसी तरह से फियेट की कीमत बढ़ जाए, कोई फर्क नहीं पड़ता है । लेकिन गरीब आदमी जरूरी चीजों की कीमतें बढ़ने से मंहगाई का शिकार जरूर होता है ।

इसलिए मैं चाहता हूं कि जो ये 10–12 आइटम्स हैं—जैसे सब्जियां हैं, चाय है, गरीब लोगों के लिए कपड़ा है, उनके यातायात की व्यवस्था है, केरोसिन तेल है, खाने का तेल है—सरकार इन चीजों की कीमत निर्धारित करे । ठाकुर जी एक अनुभवी व्यक्ति हैं । मैं उनसे कहना चाहता हूं कि आप इन जरूरी चीजों की एक लिस्ट तैयार करें और लिस्ट तैयार करते हुए आप घोषणा कर दें कि इनकी कीमत निर्धारित की जा रही है । जब आप जवाब देने लगें तो पिछले सत्रों की तरह यह जवाब न दें कि सरकार बहुत शीघ्र मूल्य वृद्धि पर अंकुश लगा देगी और हम इसके ऊपर कब्जा कर लेंगे । हम आपके मुंह से सुनना चाहते हैं कि हर गरीब आदमी जो इन चीजों का उपयोग करता है, इनकी कीमतों पर हम अगले हफ्ते से कंट्रोल कर देंगे । मैं समझता हूं कि यह इस सत्र की सबसे बड़ी देन होगी और हम लोग जो यहां बहस करके, अपनी बातें यहां पर पुरजोर ढंग से रखते हैं, हमारी वह चर्चा भी तभी सार्थक हो पाएगी । धन्यवाद ।

श्री संघ प्रिय गौतम (उत्तर प्रदेश) : सिंह साहब, आज अखबार में निकला है कि दूध के दाम बढ़ने जा रहे हैं दिल्ली में । इसका क्या होगा ?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. CHANDRESH P. THAKUR): The House stands adjourned for lunch till 2.30 p.m.

The House then adjourned for lunch at forty minutes past one of the clock.

The House reassembled at thirty-five minutes past two of the clock,,

[**The Vice-Chairman (Shri Bhaskar Annaji Masodkar)** in the Chair]

CALLING ATTENTION TO A MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE PRICE SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY AND ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT IN THE MATTER—Contd.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI BHASKAR ANNAJI MASODKAR): Now, we continue with the Calling-Attention. Shri Mentay Padmanabham.

SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, is there quorum?

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: It is there.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI BHASKAR ANNAJI MASODKAR): There is quorum, unless you do not, want to speak.

SHRI SHANKAR DAYAL SINGH: There is quorum.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI BHASKAR ANNAJI MASODKAR): He does not want to speak.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA (Gujarat): Sir, everytime we speak on prices, the prices go up. What is the use of speaking on price rise?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI BHASKAR ANNAJI MASODKAR): The Leader of the House is here.

SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKER DAVE (Gujarat): Every Session, we are discussing this question of price rise. But the prices are going up.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI BHASKAR ANNAJI MASODKAR): That is what the House can do. It cannot bring down the prices. It can only discuss.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: It can bring the Members.

SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, we have been discussing this question of price rise very often, but the problem appears to be endemic. This time, the discussion also covers the virtual breakdown of the public distribution system.

My friends, Mr. Gurudas Das Gupta and Mr. Shankar Dayal Singh, have spoken about the rate of inflation. Yesterday, we heard the Finance Minister. He claimed that the rate of inflation had come down from 16.7 per cent to 13.7 per cent. May be true. But this deceleration in the rate of inflation is due to seasonal factors. Therefore, we cannot possibly take this deceleration in the rate of inflation as a clear indication that the prices are going to come down in the near future.

I do not want to cover the ground already covered by my friends, regarding the rate of inflation and other aspects. But what I am worried is, the Government lacks a clear-cut strategy to deal with the price situation. I do not think they have any alternative options either. The way in which the Government started making some structural changes in the economy of the country, the way in which they started meddling with the fiscal policies of the country, is certain to lead to a position of inflation and, after sometime, some sort of stagnation. It cannot be ruled out. Most of the economists of this country, most of the people who are well-versed in the fiscal policies of the Government, have warned, right at the beginning, that this may, ultimately, lead to stagnation and a tremendous pressure on the price situation, pushing up the inflation spiral furher. They have also warned that this may also cause a terrible amount of agony and dissatisfaction among the people. This is going to pe true. In spite of the Finance Minister saying otherwise, in spite of his promises, the price rise appears to be uncontrollable.

There is another aspect to which I would like to draw the attention of the Government. During the last eight-nine months, the prices of essential commodities have gone sky-high. I will refer to some items. During the last eight months, the prices of vegetables have